

**National Marine Sanctuary Program
Advisory Council Information Bulletin
November 2003**

Channel Islands NMS

Channel Islands NMS in partnership with the Channel Islands National Park, Island Packers, and Veneco, Inc escorted 60 4th-6th-grade students from Mira Monte School in Ojai, CA to San Miguel Island to see the world's second largest natural gas and oil seeps off of Coal Oil Point in Santa Barbara, hike to Cabrillo Monument on San Miguel Island, and receive an introduction to sandy beach monitoring of sand crabs.

Staff of Channel Islands NMS joined Rebecca Lent, Jamie Hawkins, and Michael Weiss in San Diego on November 4th to provide the Pacific Fishery Management Council a presentation on NOAA marine protected areas policy as well as an update on the ongoing planning process for consideration of marine reserves in Channel Islands NMS federal waters.

The five-day Channel Islands NMS Shipwreck Reconnaissance Expedition was completed in collaboration with the Channel Islands National Park. The science team included Channel Islands NMS staff members Robert Schwemmer, Ben Waltenberger and Sarah Fangman. Working aboard the *R/V Shearwater*, the reconnaissance team explored shipwrecks at Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands and conducted still and videography documentation at each site. Surveys were conducted on the shipwrecks *Cuba*, *Winfield Scott*, *Aggi*, *Crown of England*, *Spirit of America* and the aircraft wreck *Grumman AF-2W Guardian*.

Cordell Bank NMS

On October 23, Cordell Bank NMS co-hosted a public lecture with Gulf of the Farallones NMS as part of the Take the Plunge lecture series sponsored by the Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association. The lecture featured two former divers from Cordell Expeditions. Fifty people attended.

Fagatele Bay NMS

Eight schools that have registered for Fagatele Bay NMS's Save-a-Beach project this school year have completed their second cleanup for this month. Both teachers and students have shown a tremendous interest in keeping their beaches clean and safe from marine debris.

Florida Keys NMS

A 4.5-foot cannon, one of 13 cannons from a site at South Carysfort Reef off North Key Largo in the Upper Region known as the Bunn Cannon Patch, was recovered on October 22, 2003. The Sanctuary Submerged Resource Inventory (SRI) Team has led the investigation of the site and is funding the conservation. The cannons were first discovered in 1993. Since that time the site has been extensively documented. Research to date indicates the cannons to be relatively unique 18th Century armaments. The sanctuary consulted extensively with the State of Florida Division of Historical Resources and NMSP Archeologist Bruce Terrell to analyze management alternatives leading to the recovery operation. The National Undersea Research Center assisted in the recovery from its research vessel *Sabina*. The Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Museum will be conserving the cannon, and the sanctuary is working with the Key Largo Chamber of Commerce to arrange for a permanent display.

Flower Garden Banks NMS

The Flower Garden Banks NMS participated in the Joint Deep Corals/Reefs and Banks of the Northwestern Gulf of Mexico research cruise funded by NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration (OE) aboard the NOAA ship *RON BROWN* from September 21 -October 3, 2003. The Flower Gardens team shared ship time with a deepwater coral research group from the Dauphin Island Marine Laboratory, the University of Alabama, the University of Oregon, and Texas A&M University. Multibeam bathymetry was also collected during transit with the SEABEAM mapping system of the *RON BROWN*.

The sanctuary issued an authorization of a Minerals Management Service permit to W&T Offshore, Inc. on October 24, 2003 to construct a pipeline from a well head located approximately four miles from the East Flower Garden Bank to the platform (High Island A389) located inside the Sanctuary boundary. The authorization was issued after certification by the applicant that no discharge of any materials associated with the pipeline (i.e. produced water) would occur inside the sanctuary. The Office of Strategic Planning is currently reviewing the NEPA paperwork and the authorization should be signed no later than Monday.

Gray's Reef NMS

On October 24th, the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Draft Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement was released for public review and comment. The plan, which has not been revised since 1983, contains two new proposed regulations, several regulatory clarifications and enhanced resource protection, science, education, outreach, enforcement and evaluation programs for the next five years. Copies of the document are available by request from the sanctuary (912/598-2345 or graysreefcomments@noaa.gov) and available on the website (www.graysreef@noaa.gov). The comment period is open until January 1, 2004.

Gulf of the Farallones NMS

The Navy has agreed to limit use of a low frequency sonar system. The Navy will limit the use of its new underwater sound system to small areas of the far western Pacific Ocean in order to avoid possible harm to whales and other sensitive marine species. It will also avoid operation in known migration routes.

The Gulf of the Farallones NMS hosted OceanFest 2003 on October 11. An estimated 6,000-8,000 people attended. The event took place at the sanctuary's Visitor Center. Forty exhibitors and over 120 sanctuary volunteers participated.

On October 10, Governor Gray Davis signed Senate Bill 245 (sponsored by Byron Sher, D-Stanford) that bans ocean farming of salmon, exotic and genetically modified fish off the coast of California.

Gulf of the Farallones NMS participated in sandy beach monitoring activities with 28 students from Daly City's Thornton Continuation High School who monitored Ft. Funston Beach. Additionally, 16 environmental science students from Marin Academy (San Rafael) and 10 marine biology students from U.C. Davis monitored Stinson Beach. Students from San Francisco University High School monitored Ocean Beach. Seven students from the Tamiscal Independent High School in Corte Madera were also trained.

Gulf of Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Association Education Coordinator, Jennifer Saltzman participated in the Math and Science Resource Fair, for 120 teachers, grades K-12, and introduced teachers to the sanctuary and the resources and activities offered at this site.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale NMS

The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale NMS hosted a booth at Children and Youth Day, Hawaii's premiere children and family festival. New features included activity zones that offered hands-on activities in Education, Safety, and Health and Fitness. The sanctuary provided information on the sanctuary and humpback whales. Sanctuary staff and volunteers also played "Whale of Fortune" with over 500 children and adults. Teacher packets were provided to 35 teachers. Students from the University of Hawaii helped to staff the booth as part of a service-learning project.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale NMS and Na Pua No'eau, 'Ao'ao O Na Loko I'a O Maui held Super Enrichment Saturday at the Maui site of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary. This educational event invites Native Hawaiian children in Kindergarten thru grade 5 to visit Ko'ie'ie Fishpond in front of the Maui sanctuary office to learn how the native Hawaiian fishpond is involved in Hawai'i's Sanctuary and how to malama (care for) it.

Monterey Bay NMS

On September 30th and October 1st, staff from the Multicultural Education for Resources Issues Threatening Oceans (MERITO) program made a presentation to English language learners through Watsonville's Adult Education program. The presentation consisted of an overview of the sanctuaries, which was followed by a watershed model demonstration and a sign-up period for upcoming MERITO events. Free passes to the Elkhorn Slough Estuarine Research Reserve were provided to all participants. These MERITO presentations are part of an ongoing series in partnership with Pájaro Valley Unified School District to better inform the non-English-speaking citizens on the sanctuary.

Monterey Bay NMS sponsored six students and one teacher from Santa Catalina School who assisted with a survey for the invasive seaweed *Undaria pinnatifida* in Monterey Harbor. Student volunteers walked the floating docks and noted the location of visible *Undaria*. In many cases, they were able to reach and remove individuals, which were then measured and examined for damage and reproductive status. 68 *Undaria* were removed. On October 23, 2003 dozens of divers from the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) also helped with the removal of the invasive seaweed as part of their annual dive-training program.

The California Department of Fish and Game lost eight Marine Warden positions as of July 1, 2003, two of which were within the MBNMS boundaries. The positions were eliminated by the Legislature due to state budget cuts. Recently, additional planned cuts have been announced that would further reduce warden staff within the sanctuary and cripple long-range patrol activity.

Olympic Coast NMS

On October 11, an empty fuel barge in tow was temporarily adrift 12 miles west of Cape Flattery after its towline was cut by a US Navy nuclear sub (*USS Topeka*). The US Coast Guard requested the emergency response tug *Barbara Foss*, stationed at Neah Bay, to lend assistance. The towline was re-established and the original tug *Ernest Campbell* continued her eastward tow with the empty barge into the Straits of Juan de Fuca. The Navy sub also continued her route into Puget Sound. An inquiry will take place to determine the cause of the incident.

Education Specialist Greg McCormack was interviewed on the new America Online (AOL) Kids Online (KOL) radio program October 14th, answering questions about wildlife in the Arctic, South Pacific and Antarctic environments. The audience is 8-12 year olds interested in animals.

Thunder Bay NMS and UP

Thunder Bay Expedition 2003 took place September 23 through October 1. The purpose of the mission was to explore newly discovered underwater sinkholes, further document the Sanctuary's historic shipwrecks, and conduct a live wireless video webcast. Partnering on this expedition with the Sanctuary was the Institute for Exploration, NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab, NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration, National Undersea Research Center for the North Atlantic and Great Lakes, University of Michigan, Grand Valley State University, and The Immersion Project. Eleven shipwrecks were documented, including additional footage of six sites from last year's expedition and five additional shipwrecks. Scientists investigated the sinkholes with a particular emphasis on highly conductive water flowing in.

National Marine Sanctuary Program

On October 17, at a first-of-its-kind symposium, the NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP), NOAA's Office of Exploration, and the U.S. Navy's Office of Naval Research (ONR) brought together historians, maritime archaeologists, Naval officers, technology industry representatives, ocean explorers, and other researchers to fill large gaps in the history of the U.S. Navy's first submarine, the *USS Alligator*. Symposium participants offered compelling new details about the *Alligator* and discussed the potential for finding and recovering the 47-foot Union sub, which was lost off the North Carolina coast in 1863. At the symposium, NMSP unveiled copies of the only known blueprints of the *Alligator*, which were located and obtained by NMSP's Catherine Marzin in May 2003. The symposium was held at the Historic Ship Nautilus and Submarine Force Museum in Groton, Conn.

An interagency (NMFS, Navy, Coast Guard) meeting was held on October 2nd on the NOAA Fisheries Strategy to Reduce Ship Strikes to Right Whales. The meeting was hosted by NMFS. This strategy consists of five elements: 1) establishment of new operational measures for the shipping industry, 2) negotiation of a Right Whale Conservation Agreement with the Canadian Government, 3) development and implementation of ship strike education and outreach programs, 4) initiation of Section 7 consultations under the Endangered Species Act with all federal agencies, which have vessels in waters inhabited by right whales, and 5) continuation of ongoing research and conservation activities that may assist in addressing this issue. The implementation of these measures are to be enacted regionally, because whale occurrence and distribution differs in each region.

Over 3,500 people (out of a total of 15,000 show attendees) stopped by the NOAA booth during the four-day Diving Equipment and Marketing Association (DEMA) Trade Show held October 8-11 in Miami. Feedback from show attendees on sanctuary programs and activities was very positive. Sanctuary staff met with various industry and conservation organizations including the Professional Association of Dive Instructors (PADI), Scuba Diving Magazine, PADI Project Aware, Oceanic, Reef Environmental Education Foundation, and Coral Reef Alliance to discuss education, outreach, and media opportunities.

On October 16 and 17 the first enforcement summit was held. The Director of the Office for Law Enforcement (OLE) and NOAA General Counsel for Enforcement & Litigation opened the meeting, which brought together 41 sanctuary managers and staff, General Counsel, and OLE HQ staff and regional Special Agents in Charge, as well as our partner state enforcement officers. This very successful session explored hurdles as well as options for enhancing sanctuary enforcement efforts. A report will be developed summarizing outcomes from the meeting. The group will determine next steps and follow-up meetings.